

## DIGLOSSIA RECONSIDERED: THE ARABIC OF EGYPTIAN NEWSPAPER DISPLAY ADS

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### I. Background

In his seminal 1959 paper, Ferguson discussed and established the concept of diglossia, which quickly became the best known feature of Arabic among linguists around the world. The simultaneous use of a "high," formal, written variety and a "low," informal, spoken variety has long occupied the thoughts of both scholars and native speakers of Arabic, both before Ferguson's paper and after it. The Arabic linguistics literature has explored and described in great detail the various levels and dialects of Arabic and the appropriate contexts in which each is used, aiming to flesh out and expand upon the original presentation of diglossia. Most Arabists have come to replace the binary opposition with a more realistic continuum along which native speakers move as they negotiate different sociolinguistic contexts. Badawi (1973) is perhaps the best example of this, recognizing five levels of spoken Arabic in Egypt. More recent work has more intently investigated the blurry areas between levels (Mitchell 1978, 1986; El-Hassan 1977, 1978; Mitchell and El-Hassan 1994).

While most such work examines spoken contexts, and while written Arabic is generally assumed to be invariant, a smaller, though significant portion attends to variation in writing. Meiseles (1979) examines informal written genres including personal letters, personal records, and manuscript drafts, where we would most likely expect influence from regional varieties. Abdelfattah (1990) and Gulley (1993) explore variation in the language of the Arabic press, where we would less likely expect such variation. Even in the highly prescriptive written context, the Arabic of newspapers varies, at the very least by region and by specific newspaper genre. Ibrahim (1997) supports this, demonstrating that Egyptians do not easily understand the headlines of Lebanese newspapers.

Given this background, I would like to recognize an emerging alternative in the discussion of Arabic diglossia which for so long has focused on different varieties and their appropriate use, and instead recast the issue as a dialectic between access to classical texts on the one hand and facilitated communication on the other. Ferguson himself seemed to have foreseen such a direction for discussion, noting that proponents of the High language variety stress its value in connection to the glorious past while proponents of the Low language variety stress its communicative effectiveness (1959:338-9).

The Arabic of advertising in Egypt is an especially interesting context in which to explore this new direction, for a number of reasons. First, language is the greatest tool of advertisers; in order to fulfill their commercial, informational, and ideological goals, they must respect the linguistic norms and sociolinguistic sensibilities of their target audience while at the same time making the most effective communicative use of the language. This is a challenge in a society which greatly esteems the elegance and complexity of its written norm, sometimes even at the expense of clear communication. Second, the Egyptian government is currently pursuing policies of privatization and globalization, under pressure from the IMF. Government sales of national holdings to the private sector and promotion of investment from the international market both lend increasing

significance to advertising, as new private sector companies have actually begun to compete with each other. Earlier, while the Egyptian economy relied almost exclusively on the public sector, government-owned advertising agencies advertised products and services of government-owned companies in government-owned newspapers distributed by government-owned distributors. Not surprisingly, such a system would easily accommodate official language policies.

In recent years, however, private advertisers have been experimenting with varying strategies as they have competed with each other in the market place. Innovation in the language they use has been especially notable. Interestingly, newspapers have allowed advertisers a relatively free hand, publishing ads with language which likely makes Arabic teachers and members of the Arabic Language Academy cringe. El-Said Badawi notes that *al-Ahram*<sup>1</sup>, the leading government daily, is now publishing things it would never have allowed 10-15 years ago (personal communication, 1997).

## II. Data and Methodology

This paper looks specifically at display advertisements from Egyptian newspapers. Display ads are those we usually think of when we think of newspaper advertisements; they contrast with classified ads, which I will not discuss here. My data corpus consists of display ads from Arabic-language newspapers distributed in Cairo between October 1997 and January 1998. They include dailies, weeklies, fortnightlies and monthlies, published by the government press, opposition parties, and private publishers.

A two-stage sampling of the newspaper display ads yielded a corpus of 1,985 ads, representing approximately 1% of all the display ads which would be published in Egyptian papers in the period of a year. The sampling methodology is described below. The analysis presented here is based on a random selection of 200 ads from this larger corpus.

In the first stage of sampling, I collected newspaper issues published in Cairo. These include four major dailies (*al-Ahram*, *al-Akhbaar*, *al-Gumhuuriyya*, and *al-Masaa'*) from October 25 to November 7, 1997, as well as the same papers plus all other daily, bi-weekly, weekly, fortnightly, and monthly papers available from Cairo newsstands from December 12, 1997 to January 6, 1998. Together, this corpus includes 311 individual copies of 36 different newspapers, with a total of 14,243 display advertisements.

After enumerating the number of display ads in each newspaper issue, I calculated the average number of display ads per newspaper, along with median and standard deviation statistics. Based on informant suggestions that papers published on certain days of the week contained more advertising than others, I also calculated the average number of display ads per paper per day of the week. Further, as a portion of my corpus was published during the Islamic month of Ramadan, January 1-6, 1998, and because informants suggested that this affected newspaper advertising, I also calculated the average number of display ads per paper on Ramadan dates in contrast to non-Ramadan dates.

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<sup>1</sup>Throughout this paper, I use the following transliteration symbols. Fricatives: dh/th = +/-vd interdental, sh = -vd palato-alveolar, gh/kh = +/-vd uvular, <sup>c</sup>h = +/-vd pharyngeal; stops: q = -vd uvular, ' = glottal; ʃ, ʤ, ʤ' = pharyngealized; aa, uu, ii, ee = long vowels.

*Al-Ahram* publishes the greatest number of display ads per paper with a mean of 127.7. The closest competitor is *al-Akhbaar* with a mean of 85.3. Other daily papers range from *al-Masaa'* with 60.3 to *al-Ahram* with 3.2. The mean number of ads per paper among the non-daily papers ranged from 25.0 in both *Akhbaar al-Hawaadith* and *Akhbaar al-Nuguum* to 0.8 in *al-Maydaan*. The day of the week had variable impact on the number of ads published. *Al-Ahram al-Masaa'ii* is most notable in this regard, in which special weekly 'Tuesday meeting' advertising pages raise the average number on that day to 47, in sharp contrast to its general average of 17.7. *Al-Wafd* publishes more ads on Thursdays, when the average is 23.8, in contrast to a consistent 16-17 on other days. Finally, *al-Ahram* publishes an average of 7 ads on Monday in contrast to the regular 2-3 on other days. Ramadan does not seem to have a great impact on the number of ads newspapers publish. Nor is there even a consistent tendency among the papers to publish more or fewer ads during Ramadan.

The second stage of sampling was based on this data and on an estimated 142,140 expected display advertisements in Egyptian newspapers in a given year. I calculated this latter figure by first reconstructing the total number of expected ads during the 40 days of the periods between October 25-November 7, 1997 and December 12, 1997-January 6, 1998, which was necessary because newspaper issues for some days in these periods are not actually represented in the stage one sample. This reconstruction brought the 14,243 ads in the actual sample to an expected 15,577 ads during these 40 days. I then extrapolated these 15,577 ads per 40 days to an expected 142,140 ads per 365 days.

To ensure representative advertisements from all the newspapers in the corpus, the newspapers were separated into those with a mean of 16 or greater ads per paper and those with a mean of 9 or fewer. The lower group consists of 27 papers with a total of 470 ads; all of these ads were included in the second stage of sampling. The higher group consists of 9 papers with a total of 13,773 ads. From these 13,773 ads from the higher group, 11% or 1515 were included in the second stage of sampling to give a total of 1,985 ads. This process produced a proportional representation of ads by day of the week and Ramadan status. Further, it ensured that all the papers in the corpus would be well-represented in the sample to be analyzed.

The 11% of the ads from the higher group was selected by taking every ninth display ad from each of the nine newspapers in the group. The number two was randomly picked from among the numbers from one to nine, and beginning with the second ad of the first issue of *al-Ahram*, every ninth ad was collected from all the papers in the group. I counted the ads based on their location on the page, beginning from the right side moving left, and from the top moving down; further right took precedence over higher up when the two potentially conflicted. Counting carried over from one issue to the next, and from the last issue of one paper to the first of another, beginning with *al-Ahram*<sup>2</sup> and continuing through *al-Akhbaar*, *al-Gumhuuriyya*, *al-Wafd*, *al-Ahram al-Masaa'ii*, *al-Masaa'*, *Akhbaar al-Hawaadith*, *Akhbaar al-Nuguum*, and *Akhbaar al-Riyaaqa*.

I randomized a list of numbers 1-1,985 using a Claris Hyper Card Player program designed for the task. As I photocopied each ad in the second sampling, I assigned it one of the randomized numbers on the list and wrote this number on the photocopied page. The record list and the photocopied ads were then sorted numerically, randomizing the numbered ads. This process ensured that the source of each ad was blinded and could not affect the analysis.

<sup>2</sup>Due to misordered papers, *al-Ahram* issues were counted in the following order: 12/19, 12/21, 12/20, 12/22-1/7, 10/25-11/7, 12/12-12/18; Oct-Dec dates are in 1997 while Jan dates are in 1998. All other newspapers were counted in chronological order.

### III. Analysis

Analysis of these ads follows three basic parameters which suggested themselves both during the course of the interviews I conducted with Egyptian advertisers, publishers, and professors in related fields, and from a preliminary scan of the textual data. It was hypothesized that the language of contemporary newspaper advertisements would be characterized by 1) some influence from the local spoken variety, Egyptian colloquial Arabic; 2) the use of foreign language items, especially English; and 3) some violations of prescriptive written norms, especially when that might facilitate more effective communication.

A full 57% of the ads I've examined exhibit at least one example of one or more of these three parameters, suggesting that the Arabic of less than half of the ads would meet the standards of prescriptive purists. Among the 57% of the ads with some non-standard variation, 10.5% have some influence from Egyptian colloquial Arabic, 29. 5% have some foreign language influence, and a fairly large 34% have some violation of prescriptive written norms. These three categories are, of course, interconnected and not always easily distinguished from each other, nor are they mutually exclusive.

Influence from Egyptian colloquial Arabic appears most simply in individual words, such as *firaakh* 'chicken' and *'agaazaat* 'vacations.' In the absence of a standard orthography for spoken varieties of Arabic, writing highly marked colloquial words such as these two is improvised. For words which might be considered 'cognates' between standard and colloquial varieties, the orthography follows written conventions, allowing readers to assign formality level in their pronunciation. Examples of such words appear in Table I. Writers, in fact, often exploit this

Table I. Comparison of Standard and Colloquial 'Cognates'

Standard Orthography	Standard Transliteration	Colloquial Pronunciation	English Gloss
دقيقة	<i>daqiqqa</i>	<i>da'ii'a</i>	minute
ثلاثة	<i>thalaatha</i>	<i>takata</i>	three
ذهب	<i>dhahab</i>	<i>dahab</i>	gold
جنيه	<i>gunayh</i>	<i>gineeh</i>	pound (currency unit)

fuzzy area; Nobel Prize winner Naguib Mahfouz, for example, is famous for using it to capture the feel of spoken dialogue in his notably standard prose. In the air conditioning ad in Fig. 1 (next page), the advertisers seem to want to achieve the same feeling, quoting a satisfied customer who says their air conditioner is *zayy al-gunayh al-dhahab*, roughly 'worth its weight in gold.'

*zayy al-gunayh al-dhahab*  
like the-pound the-gold  
'worth its weight in gold'

While newspapers regularly convert quotes from spoken to written norms, this quote begins with the colloquially marked *zayy* 'like.' The other two words, 'pound' and 'gold' are cognates: in standard Arabic *gunayh* and *dhahab* (as they appear in the ad) and in Egyptian colloquial *gineeh* and *dahab*. Despite the orthography, readers likely pronounce these words colloquially as they read, given the context set by the first word in the quote. Also worth noting in Fig. 1 is the strikingly prominent position of the colloquial phrase in this full half-page ad.

Fig. 1. Miraco air conditioning, *al-Wafd*, 1/1/98, p. 14

**زى**  
**الحنينه**  
**الذهب**

مقولة من عميل  
يملاء بشكيبف ميراکو  
منذ ١٨ سنة

**Miraco**  
Carrier

لاشئ يفوق الخبرة

Just as quoting the customer seems to license the use of colloquial in the ad in Fig. 1, a rhyme scheme seems to justify it in the electronics ad in Fig. 2. The phrase 'uṣaadkuu 'in front of you' is clearly colloquial, chosen no doubt because it rhymes with the name of the company, which comes at the end of the next line, *ithallit ma'a ṣaadkuu* 'it was solved by Sadco.'

*thalath muf'adl-axt 'uṣaad-kuu ...*  
three equation-PL in front-OBJ.2nd.PL  
'Three equations before you ...'  
*it-hall-it ma'a ṣaadkuu*  
PASS-to.solve-SUBJ.3rd.FEM.SG with Sadco  
'... solved with Sadco.'

An especially significant feature in the ad in Fig. 2 is the colloquial morphology for the passive verb. Standard written Arabic most often uses ablaut to indicate the passive. But because this ablaut usually affects short vowels and because short vowels are not indicated in most printing, passive and active verbs are orthographically identical, causing publishers and readers some difficulty. In this example, however, any potential ambiguity is eliminated by using the

Fig. 2. Sadco Electronics,  
*al-Akhbaar*, 12/26/97, p. 3

ثلاث معادلات تمادكو ... إلتأت مع صادكو

تليفزيون + فيديو = فيوماكس

شاهد + سجل = برامج رمضان

مقدم

قسط

شهر

ودد سعر القسط

$$٢٥٩٩ = ٣٦ \times ٦٩ + ١١٥$$

جولداستار ٢٠ بوصة

بالفيديو (فيوماكس)

لدى

صادكو

اسمها المهندس صادق غبور

القاهرة، ١١٢٢ كورنيش النيل - ماسبيرو ٥٧٩٢٠٧١ / ٥٧٩٢٠٧٠  
الجيزة، ٦٥ شارع الملك فيصل - الريوطية ٢٨٦٢٥٥٢ / ٢٨٦٢٥٥٤  
الإسكندرية، ١٠٧ ش محرم بك ٤٩٢٢٢٢٤٤ / ٤٩٢٢٢٢١٢  
١٨ ش مرسى بدر - خلف نقطة شريف ٤٩٥٥٤١٢ / ٤٩٤١٥٠٢  
٩ ش سليمان القارسي - العصارفة - بحرى ٥٥٥١١٥٧ / ٥٥٥١١٥٦

colloquial passive morphology. Table II below gives an idea of how this works: the first two lines show the standard active and passive forms of the verbs 'to solve' and 'to be solved.' Only the unwritten vowel marks and context indicate which interpretation is appropriate. The third line, however, shows the colloquial passive form, which differs from the active form even in print, clearly facilitating communication in this advertisement by disambiguating the potentially confusing standard orthography.

Table II. Comparison of Active and Passive Forms

Form	Printed	Vowelled	Transliteration	Gloss
Standard Active	حلت	حَلَّتْ	hallat	'it solved'
Standard Passive	حلت	حُلَّتْ	hullat	'it was solved'
Colloquial Passive	انحلت	انْحَلَّتْ	ithallit	'it was solved'

The second parameter, contemporary foreign language influence, derives predominantly from English. In spite of its complex morphological system, Arabic readily accepts single borrowed lexical items. Most commonly these words remain invariable in their original forms, as in *fiyuumaaks* 'Viewmax'<sup>3</sup> (Fig. 2) or *intarkum* 'intercom' (Fig. 3, next page), both nouns for technologies introduced from outside the Arab world. *Fiyuumaaks* 'viewmax' is a generalized brand name for combined TV/VCR unit.

In the commercial real estate ad in Fig. 3, the word 'panorama' is used adjectivally to give 'glass-walled elevators,' another recent innovation.

masaa'id baanuuraamaa wa 'caadiyy-a  
elevator.PL panoramic and regular-FEM  
'glass walled and conventional elevators'

Interestingly, the ad does not use the colloquial word for elevator *asunseer*, borrowed from French, indicating that this is meant to be a more formal text. This, combined with the text's adherence to standard prescriptive norms, is consistent with the upper class market being targeted by this ad for new tenants in an exclusive new corporate property, appearing as it does in full-color on the front page of *al-Ahram*, Egypt's leading daily.

Examples like *'a'yaad al-kriismaas* 'the Christmas holidays' and *'ag-hizit al-'ansar maashiin* 'answering machines' show how loan words fit into native syntax. The *idaafa* construction or 'construct state' links two juxtaposed nouns in a genitival relationship, the second term limiting the first. Only the second term can have the definite article, which then applies to the whole construct state. In these examples, the definite article is attached to the loan word 'Christmas' or 'answer machine,' rendering the whole phrase definite, and conforming to prescriptive norms as would any native Arabic word. Note here also that while it is commonly celebrated as a secular holiday, especially in the larger urban centers, *kriismaas* is an imported concept, too, contrasting with *'iid al-milaad*, which Egyptian Coptic Christians celebrate in early January.

Borrowed compound lexical items present more interesting analysis. Compounds attested in the ad corpus such as *garaag siil* 'garage sale' (Fig. 3) and *taayn shiir* 'time share' appear in writing as two words. Native speakers, however, seem to interpret these compounds as single

<sup>3</sup>The consonant inventory of Arabic does not include /v/ or /p/; in loanwords using these consonants, Arabic usually substitutes /f/ and /b/, respectively.

units, as suggested by the definite article morphology of *al-diib friizar* 'the deep freezer' and *al-riimuut kuntruul* 'the remote control.' This is further supported by examples like *ʿadwiyyat Pyramisa Traveller Club* 'Pyramisa Traveller Club membership' and *ʿadwiyya maggaaniyya li-al-RCI* 'free membership in the RCI,' where items in Latin script are incorporated into otherwise Arabic phrases. In both these cases the loaned items are treated as single units, in an *idaafa* construction and as the object of a preposition, respectively. Similarly, the phrase *gihaaz laayfak al-amriikii* 'the American Life Tech machine' has the loaned compound as a second term of an *idaafa*, the whole of which is modified by the adjective 'American.' Further, the phrase *al-sayyaaraat al-stiishin waagan* 'the station wagon cars' has the borrowed compound serving adjectivally to modify 'cars.' All these examples offer strong evidence that borrowed compounds are interpreted in Arabic as single units, even if they appear orthographically as compounds.

Striking indication of the significance of the processes of compound borrowing is provided by data like *al-ʿabuur santar* 'the El-Ebour Center' (Fig. 3) and *ṭayyiba muul* 'Tayyiba Mall,' in which compounds are formed from borrowed and native components, apparently modeled on the borrowing of entire compounds described above. In these and similar data, the native+borrowed compound is treated as a single unit, as indicated by the definite article morphology attached to the first term of the compound, in contrast to *ʿaʿyaad al-kriismaas* 'the Christmas holidays' and *ʿag-hizit al-ʿansar maashiin* 'answering machines,' which conform to prescriptive rules governing *idaafa* constructions, as discussed above.

Fig. 3. The El-Ebour Center,  
*al-Ahraam*, 12/23/97, p. 1

انضم إلى الصفوة ...  
الآن فتح باب العجز للمرحلة الثانية

في أمّنا وأقرب مركز تجاري وإداري

# العبور سنتر

أفضل موقع بمدينة العبور - ١٥ دقيقة من مصر الجديدة



١٥ % دفعة حجز وتخصيص

السداد على ٣ سنوات بدون فوائد وتسهيلات حتى ٥ سنوات  
٤٠٠ وحدة تجارية وإدارية بمساحات تبدأ من ١٥ م

- \* مدافع رخام \* سلايم متحركة \* مصاعد بانوراما عادية
- \* مولدات كهرباء احتياطية \* خزانات مياه \* فتركم
- \* أنظمة متكاملة للأمن والحراسة وإطفاء الحرائق - إيريال مركزي
- \* سنترال مركزي \* مهبط طائرات \* جراج يسع ١٢٠ سيارة
- \* شركة حراسة ومراقبة ونظافة

\* تخصيص مسطح خلّص مجاني لحالات السوق  
لإقامة مهرجانات تسويقية جراج سيل طوال العام

أرقى مواصفات التشغيل - الوحدات تصلح لكافة الأغراض

للاستعلام والحجز

شركة العبور للاستثمار العقاري ش.م.م

٢٥ ش أبو بكر الصديق - مصر الجديدة

ت: ٢٤٧٤٩٦٤ - ٢٤٧٤٩٦٥ ف: ٢٤٧٤٩٦٢

page: [www.elebour.com](http://www.elebour.com) EMAIL: [info@elebour.com](mailto:info@elebour.com)

It seems, then, that foreign language compounds first enter Arabic at the spoken level, where they are interpreted as single units. When they come to be written, speakers familiar with the original language realize that they are compounds and transcribe them in Arabic as such. Critically, because the definite article morphology will have already taken hold at the spoken level, orthographic norms are modified to accommodate that, leaving the definite article on the first term. Later, when native+borrowing combinations are coined, as in *al-ʿabuur santar* 'the El-Ebour Center' (Fig. 3), they follow the pattern of borrowed compounds. While syntactic evidence for this is strong, little other morphological evidence is available to support or refute this analysis. Note in connection to this that the term 'deep freezer' is contextually plural, though without plural morphology.

*al-thallaag-aat      wa      al-diib      friizar*  
the-refrigerator-PL and the-deep freezer  
'refrigerators and deep freezers'

A theoretical structure like *al-diib friizar-aat* would offer significant support to the analysis presented here, indicating that while borrowed compounds are treated as compounds orthographically, they are treated as single units morphologically. No such example, however, has been attested in the data.

As we move to discuss violations of prescriptive written norms, the *idaafa* construction is again at issue. A number of the ads in the corpus made use of *idaafa* constructions with compound first terms, a structure called *iqhaan* in Arabic, and disfavored by grammarians. An example from my corpus is *fidiyuuhaat wa taliifiziyyuunaat guuldistaar* 'Goldstar VCR's and televisions,' rather than the preferred *fidiyuuhaat guuldistaar wa taliifiziyyuunaatuh*, more closely translated as 'Goldstar's VCR's and its televisions.' Gulley (1993) suggests that *iqhaan* has some classical precedence and seems to be an equally frequent, though less formal, stylistic variant in journalistic Arabic. Abdelfattah (1990:102) demonstrates modern diachronic change in the frequency of *iqhaan*, which occurred in 61.1% of the relevant *idaafa* constructions in his corpus of journalistic Arabic from 1989, in contrast to 16.7% of comparable 1935 data.

Differences between standard Arabic and the colloquial varieties account for numerous and well-attested difficulties with case markings. In particular, the complex rules of standard Arabic governing the case of nouns with numbers prove especially troublesome (Parkinson 1993). Such trouble appears relatively infrequently in writing, however, since case endings are usually unwritten short vowels. An exception to this is the accusative case of masculine singular words, which are marked with the letter *alif* which serves as a place-holder for the case ending. Frequently, this *alif* is left out, as in جنيه ٢٥٠ 250 *gunayh* '250 (Egyptian) pounds,' instead of جنيه ٢٥٠ *gunayhan* (Fig. 4, next page); this is the case in eleven of the ads in the corpus.

Case marking difficulties also show up in a limited but productive class of nouns and adjectives which end in long vowels, as in الغالي *al-ghaalii* 'the valuable.' For indefinite words in the nominative and genitive cases, the long vowel is dropped. However, because such words are invariable in Egyptian colloquial, always pronounced with the vowel, it is not surprising to see the vowel appear in writing even in the nominative and genitive cases, as it does in غالي *ghaalii* 'valuable,' prescriptively غالى *ghaalii* in the nominative case. Advertisers are faced with an especially interesting dilemma here, because the prescriptively correct form is not likely to be easily understood except by the very well educated. Some advertisers, in fact, have told me they prefer the "incorrect" but communicatively more effective form.



By far the most common violations of prescriptive written norms are orthographic errors in the use of *hamza* (•), the diacritic representing the phonemic glottal stop. Such errors affect a full 24% of the ads in the corpus. Complex rules govern the placement of *hamza*, and variation in actual usage is considerable (Parkinson 1990). Confusion is caused by a word-initial, phonotactically conditioned glottal stop, which is not prescriptively represented by *hamza*. In practise, however, writers frequently over-generalize and use it to represent both the phonemic and non-phonemic glottal stops. This occurs most commonly in the verbal nouns derived from verbs of Form VII-X, such as *اتفاقية* 'ittiḥaqqiyya 'agreement,' which appears as إتفاقية (with the *hamza*) in the ad in Fig. 4. This particular violation is not new, and in fact has precedence dating back to ancient manuscripts (Caspari 1962).

It seems likely that this 'misplaced' *hamza* has been reinterpreted as an indicator not of the glottal stop, but rather of vowel quality. Word-initially, the letter *alif* serves as a place-holder for *hamza* followed by all three short vowels (*a u i*). With *a* and *u*, the *hamza* appears above the *alif* (أ), but with *i*, the *hamza* appears below the *alif* (إ), thus serving to clear up some potential ambiguity, at least distinguishing word-initial *i* from *a* and *u*. While the short vowel marks could be used for the same purpose, they do not usually appear in print, so the *hamza* offers a more appealing alternative. Further evidence for this comes from foreign terms transcribed into Arabic, which frequently use the *hamza* for this purpose, as in *سويارو إمبيرا* *suubaaruu* 'imbiriizaa' 'Subaru Impreza' and *سويارو إيجيت* *suubaaruu* 'iijibt' 'Subaru Egypt.'

#### IV. Conclusions

Arabic ads are especially interesting because of the specific communicative concerns of Arab advertisers and their willingness to manipulate the varied repertoire available to them, a willingness in writing unusual among well-educated Arabic speakers. The current economic, political, and social climate in Egypt provides advertisers a creative and conducive forum for their exploration of effective language use. This study of their work in print suggests that they are tending to move toward a written language which more closely resembles the spoken language. Indeed, the Arabic of newspaper advertisements in Egypt is influenced considerably by Egyptian colloquial Arabic, and this colloquial influence seems to drive much of the violation of prescriptive written norms and to facilitate use of foreign language items, both of which characterize the Arabic of many of the newspaper ads examined here. Such a finding concurs with recent work on the English of relatively new communication media such as e-mail, which is perhaps comparable to Egyptian newspaper ads, suggesting a reduction of the distinction between the written and spoken modes.

Fig. 4. Mark Center, *al-Ahram*, 10/25/97, p.32

البرنامج التدريبي  
الإستراتيجيات الحديثة للتسويق الدولي  
في ظل إتفاقية الجات  
من ١١/١ حتى ١٩٩٧/١١/٥  
مدة البرنامج ٥ أيام  
قيمة اشتراك الفرد في البرنامج ٢٥٠ جنيه  
التدريب مسائي من الساعة ٦ حتى ٩,٣٠  
الأماكن محدودة والقبول بأسبقية الحجز  
مركز مارك - أحد المراكز المتخصصة في جريدة الأهرام  
ش الجلاء القاهرة ت: ٥٧٨٦٠٣٣  
من ٩ صباحاً حتى ٨ مساءً  
ماعد الجمعة

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